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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Information Radio-Television Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2411

May 5, 1989

SOVIET WHEAT -- The Soviets are expected to buy rather quickly the first million metric tons of subsidized wheat, under President George Bush's May 2 authorization to sell 1.5 million metric tons to the USSR under the Export Enhancement Program. The date is yet to be determined for when the USSR will purchase the additional 500,000 tons. The first million tons will consist of both old- and new-crop wheat. The Soviets are also expected to buy non-subsidized wheat above and beyond this 1.5 million tons -- perhaps during July and August, when U.S. wheat is at its most competitive price.

HORMONE AGREEMENT -- Sec. Clayton Yeutter and U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills announced a tentative agreement with the EC on the beef hormone dispute that will allow partial resumption of trade. The May 3 agreement will enable U.S. producers to ship meat not treated with hormones to Europe, where the EC will certify the meat. "While this measure does not resolve the trade problem or the larger issue of principle, it is a positive step toward de-escalating the hormones dispute," Hills said.

DROUGHT TASKFORCE -- The USDA Drought Task Force Sec. Yeutter established last week will be chaired by Undersecretary Richard Crowder, with membership by administrators of ASCS, FmHA, FCIC, ERS, SCS, FS, World Ag Outlook Board and the director of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Nature owes 10 to 12 inches of rain in the southern and eastern tiers of counties in Iowa to bring the subsoil moisture up to normal. California needs 9 to 15 inches of rain to balance the moisture account. The Gulf Coast of Texas needs 12 to 14 inches. Other areas needing rain include parts of Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and Minnesota. The next long-term Palmer Drought Index is due out May 6.

TWO MORE STAFFERS NAMED -- Sec. Clayton Yeutter has named John B. Campbell as deputy undersecretary of agriculture for international affairs and commodity programs. He also named Bruce Blanton as executive assistant to Deputy Secretary Jack C. Parnell. Campbell, 31, comes to USDA from the Senate Agriculture Committee staff and Blanton, 30, was senior analyst for agriculture on the Senate Budget Committee staff.

FOOD CONSUMPTION HABITS CHANGE -- U.S. meat consumption has seen marked changes in American eating habits during the past two decades. We'll be eating more chicken per person than ever before in 1989. On a boneless weight, we'll eat 46.7 pounds of chicken and 65.9 pounds of beef. Such information and more is available in "Food Beyond the Farmgate," available from Lewrene Glaser (202) 786-3313.

GATT & AGRICULTURE -- A new publication from USDA actually makes GATT and agriculture easy to understand. For example: How many sets of rules control agricultural policy worldwide? Answer: 4,000 -- each with dozens of specific policies. Picture 4,000 teams of experts (there must be experts on each crop or group of crops) trying to negotiate one set of uniform rules for the entire world! Want a copy of GATT & AGRICULTURE? Call Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445.

NEW RABBIT DISEASE -- USDA is warning rabbit raisers to watch for viral hemorrhagic disease. It has not yet been detected in the U.S., but has been seen in Mexican domestic rabbits. The disease affects the rabbits' respiratory system and kills up to 90 percent or more of the rabbits that become ill. Contact: Marlene Stinson (301) 436-7555.

AG CHARTBOOK -- The 1989 Agricultural Chartbook is hot off the presses at USDA. This year's book is even more useful than in the past. It contains a wealth of agricultural information. Can't say enough good things about this treasury of information. For a copy, call Marci Hilt (202) 447-6445.

DRINKING WATER -- How much water do you use when you shower? How much of the Earth's water is suitable for drinking? The average shower uses 25 to 50 gallons; and only 1 percent of the Earth's water is suitable for drinking. You may not have know it, but May 1 - 7 was National Drinking Water Week. Specialists at the University of Georgia's Extension Service warn: Don't take drinking water for granted. Contact: Susan Hammack (912) 386-3203.

FOOD & AGRICULTURE EXPO -- Don't forget the National Food and Agriculture Exposition, May 15-17 at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston. Sponsored by the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture and USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, the exposition is the only trade show of its type in the nation. Complete news room facilities will be available. Contact: Diane Baedecker (617) 727-3018.

WALNUT TREES A HOT ITEM -- Wood fanciers are creating a big new demand for walnut, the Wall Street Journal reported recently. The demand for trendy walnut, with its golden swirls and purplish feathering, is so big it's grown a new job -- professional tree "spotters" who comb woodlands to buy the elusive trees. Prices typically range from \$100 to \$1,000 per tree. Black walnut occurs naturally only about once per wooded acre in the U.S., compared with 100 oaks per acre. The price of walnut lumber is up nearly 20 percent since 1984. New black walnut plantings aren't harvestable for at least 50 years.
USDA Contact: Jerome W. Van Sambeek & George Rink (612) 649-6695.

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1665 -- The National Agricultural Library is starting a high tech information service for farmers who want to know more about low input farming practices (LISA). Pat O'Leary has this report. (Weekly 13-1/2 min. documentary)

AGRITAPE #1654 -- USDA news highlights; the Soviet export enhancement offer; spying on insects; power lines and your livestock. (Weekly reel of news features)

CONSUMER TIME #1147 -- Know your onions; a library for LISA; reserve a campsite; a new nutrition tool; food in the future. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 - 3 min. features)

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Thursday, May 11, U.S. crop production (including first winter wheat estimate), Soviet crop report, world supply & demand; Friday, May 12, farm labor, world ag/grain production, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation, U.S. poultry & livestock outlook; Monday, May 15, U.S. milk production; Tues., May 16, crop/weather update; Wed., May 17, cattle on feed; Thurs., May 18, Soviet outlook; Friday, May 19, U.S. ag outlook; Monday, May 22, catfish production, U.S. wheat outlook.

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359.
Material changed at 5 p.m. EDT each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

AGRICULTURAL UPDATE and USDA NEWS SERVICE are available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8:

THURSDAY 7:30-7:45 p.m., EDT, Transponder 12D

SATURDAY 10:30-11:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 10D

MONDAY 8:30-9:15 a.m., EDT, Transponder 12D
(Repeat of Saturday transmission)

OFF MIKE

A MARKETING LOAN...program for soybeans in a 1990 farm bill is getting a lot of favorable comment by producers, says Jerry Gehman (WASG, Atmore, Ala.). Jerry, as NAFB regional vice president, reminds us that the Southeast regional meeting is scheduled May 18-21 in Gulf Shores, Ala. Meeting includes a Saturday afternoon news conference with scientists from Auburn University who have developed a new soybean variety.

MAY...19-21 are the dates for the NAFB South Central meeting. Regional vice president Curt Lancaster says the event will be held in Springfield, Mo. Items scheduled includes a tour of Bass Pro Shops world headquarters.

MAY AND JUNE...usually bring the central Corn Belt about 20 to 25 percent of its annual rainfall. If that happens this year the feed grain harvest could be large, more acres planted. Soil moisture conditions map to be released May 6. April map showed large pockets of dryness remaining.

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MIGHT...as well get on this story early. Sunspot activity, and the magnetic storms they create, are predicted to peak in February 1990. Increased interference in radio and satellite communications is likely. Some meteorologists say magnetic storms also affect weather, causing deviations from the norm. CONGRATULATIONS...to Orion Samuelson (WGN/Tribune Radio Net, Chicago). National Agri-Marketing Association presented to him its National Award of Excellence. PRESIDENT'S...comments were carried live, says Max Armstrong (WGN/Tribune Radio Net, Chicago), regarding USDA's recent radio news conference with Pres. George Bush and Sec. Yeutter Tribune network's 175 TV stations carried it on their "U.S. Farm Report." We appreciate the feedback.



VIC POWELL, Chief, Radio & Television Division